



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE COMING SEA-POWER.

BY CHARLES H. CRAMP.

---

MOST well-informed people have a pretty clear general idea that the present is an era of unexampled naval activity throughout the civilized world ; that great fleets are building everywhere ; that the ships composing them are of new types, representing the highest development of naval architecture and the most exquisite refinement of the art of naval armament. Doubtless, a much smaller number of persons are aware that a new factor of imposing proportions has come into the general situation ; that the newest member of the family of civilization is with rapid strides reaching a status of actual and potential sea-power with which the older nations must henceforth reckon most seriously.

It is, however, questionable whether any one not intimately conversant with the current history of modern ship-building, or not qualified to estimate properly the relative values of actual armaments, can adequately conceive the vast significance of the prodigious efforts which this youngest of civilized nations is successfully putting forth toward the quick and sure attainment of commanding power on the sea.

In order to estimate accurately the significance of the current naval activity of Japan, it is requisite to trace briefly her prior development as a maritime power.

The foundation of the Japanese navy was laid by the purchase of the Confederate ram "Stonewall," built in France in 1864, surrendered to the United States in 1865, and shortly afterward sold or given to Japan. This ship was soon followed by another of somewhat similar type, built at the Thames Iron Works in 1864-1865, now borne on the Japanese navy list as the "Riojo," and used as a gunnery and training ship.

From that time to the period of the Chinese war the naval

growth of Japan was steady, and, considering her very recent adoption of Western methods, rapid.

At the beginning of that war Japan, though possessing a very respectable force of cruisers and gunboats, mostly of modern types and advanced design, had no armored ships worthy of the name. The old "Stonewall" had been broken up, the "Fu-So," the "Riojo," the "Heiyei," and the "Kon-Go," built from 1865 to 1877, were obsolete, and the "Chiyoda"—the only one of modern design and armament—was a small armored cruiser of 2,450 tons, with a 4½-inch belt, and no guns larger than 4.7-inch calibre.

The unarmored fleet, however, on which she had to rely, was, for its total displacement, equal to any in the world. It embraced three of the "Hoshidate" class, 4,277 tons and 5,400 horse-power; two of the "Naniwa" class, 3,650 tons and 7,000 horse-power, which had been considered by our Navy Department worth copying in the "Charleston," the "Yoshino," 4,150 tons and 15,000 horse-power, and about fifteen serviceable gun-vessels from 615 to 1,700 tons. All of the cruisers had been built in Europe, but most of the gun-vessels were of Japanese build, and represented the first efforts of the Japanese people in modern naval construction.

Among the results of the war was the addition of several Chinese vessels to the Japanese navy, including the battleship "Chen Yuen," of 7,400 tons and 6,200 horse-power, and the "Ping Yuen," armored coast defence ship, which had been captured by the unarmored cruisers of the Mikado.

At the end of the war Japan had forty-three sea-going vessels, displacing in the aggregate 79,000 tons, of which seven serviceable ships, with total displacement of 15,000 tons, were prizes.

The navy in commission at this writing embraces forty-eight sea-going ships, of 111,000 tons displacement, and twenty-six torpedo boats. The five sea-going vessels, of 32,000 tons total displacement, which have been added since the war, represent the most advanced types of model naval architecture, and include two first-class battleships of 12,800 tons each, the "Fuji" and "Yashima."

The ship-building programme now in process of actual construction is calculated to produce by the year 1903 a total effec-

tive force of 67 sea-going ships, 12 torpedo-catchers and 75 torpedo boats, with an aggregate displacement of more than 200,000 tons.

To the navy in commission or available for instant service, already described, Japan now adds, in plain sight under actual construction in various stages of forwardness, a new fleet vastly superior in power and efficiency to it.

Here I desire to say that the word "progress," in its conventional sense, does not adequately indicate the naval activity of Japan. The word implies continuity, by more or less even pace, in one of two directions, or in both; one direction is an increase in tonnage, with but little or no improvement in efficiency; and the other is a marked advance of new ships in all the elements of offence, defence, staying power and economy.

The first condition of progress is represented by the present activity of most nations who are sailing along evenly and with self-approval in fancied superiority. The second condition is represented by Japan, who suddenly appears as a cyclone in a smooth sea of common-place progress.

Japan is not only building more ships than any other power except England, but she is building better ships in English shipyards than England herself is constructing for her own navy. While other nations proceed by steps, Japan proceeds by leaps and bounds. What other nations are doing may be described as progress, but what Japan is doing must be termed a phenomenon. She is now building:

(1.) Three 14,800-ton battleships, which are well advanced at Armstrong's, Thompson's, and the Thames Iron Works, respectively.

(2.) One battleship of about 10,000 tons, commencing at Armstrong's.

(3.) Four first-class armored cruisers of 9,600 tons displacement and twenty knots speed; two at Armstrong's, one at the Vulcan Works, Stettin, Germany, and one at Forges et Chantiers, France.

(4.) Two 5,000-ton protected cruisers of about twenty-three knots speed; one at San Francisco and one at Philadelphia.

(5.) One protected cruiser of 4,300 tons and about twenty-three knots speed at Armstrong's.

(6.) Four thirty-knot torpedo-boat destroyers at Yarrow's.

- (7.) Four more of similar type at Thompson's.
- (8.) Eight 90-ton torpedo boats at the Schichau Works, Elbing, Germany.
- (9.) Four more of similar type at the Normand Works, France.
- (10.) Three 3,000-ton protected cruisers of 20 knots, three torpedo gunboats and a dispatch vessel, at the Imperial Dockyard, Yokosuka, Japan.

(11.) The programme for the current year embraces a fifth armored cruiser of the type previously described (9,600 tons and 20 knots) to be built also at Yokosuka.

This is Japan's naval increase actually in sight. Excepting the ships building at Yokosuka, the whole programme has come under my personal observation.

Comparison with the current progress of other powers discloses the fact that Japan is second only to England in naval activity, being ahead of France, much in advance of Germany, and vastly in the lead of Russia and the United States. It must also be borne in mind that the new Japanese fleet comprises throughout the very latest and highest types of naval architecture in every respect of force, economy and efficiency.

The spectacle of Japan surpassing France and closely following England herself in naval activity is startling. Considering the shortness of the time which has elapsed since Japan entered the family of nations or aspired to any rank whatever as a power, it is little short of miraculous. Yet it is a fact, and to my mind it is the most significant single fact of our time. Nations do not display such energy or undertake such expenditure without a purpose.

It can hardly be maintained that Japan aims her vast preparations at the United States; at least not primarily. The pending Hawaiian affair has given rise to some irritation, but its importance has been systematically exaggerated by the English press. It cannot, in any event, go beyond the stage of diplomatic exchanges. Japan will, doubtless, receive from the United States sufficient assurance that the rights of her subjects in Hawaii will be protected in case of annexation, and thus far she has asked no more than that. She is certainly entitled to no less.

The object of the English in encouraging Japan to make a

bold front against the United States was and is, like all their objects, purely commercial. They hoped to stir up in the Japanese mind an ill-feeling that would prevent the award of any more contracts to American ship-yards, and even this characteristic stratagem is not likely to have more than a temporary effect.

Thus I think it may be assumed that Japan's immense naval preparation is not made with the United States in hostile view; certainly not mainly.

Assuming these conditions to be beyond dispute, and considering that the completion of the Trans-Siberian railway will at once make Russia a great Pacific power, politically and commercially, her naval situation in those seas must become a matter of prime importance; perhaps not of equal importance with that of the United States now, but at once sufficient to challenge the best efforts of her statesmen.

Having all these facts in view, and being in a position to judge with some accuracy of the significance and value of preparations which came under my own observation during a recent tour of Europe in my professional capacity, I could not help remarking the vast difference between the naval activity of Japan and that of the other two first-rate Pacific powers, Russia and the United States. The existing situation in Russia and the United States, relatively speaking, can hardly be called more than the merest perfunctory progress, whereas the activity of Japan is really marvelous. If she were simply meditating another attack on China alone or unsupported, no such fleet as Japan is now building would be needed; certainly not the enormous battleships and the great armored cruisers. It must therefore be assumed that Japan's purpose is the general one of predominant sea power in the Orient.

Japan may, and probably does, meditate a renewal of her efforts to establish a footing on the Asiatic mainland. Possibly, she may have in view the ultimate acquisition of the Philippine Islands. But, whatever may be her territorial ambitions for the future, it is as plain as an open book that she intends, before she moves again, to place herself in a position to disregard and defy any external interference. This may be the true meaning of Japan's extreme activity in naval preparation at this time.

I may say without violation of confidence that a Japanese gentleman of distinction not long ago remarked in conversation

on this subject that " while Japan was forced by circumstances to yield much at Shimonoseki that she had fairly conquered, she still secured indemnity enough to build a navy that would enable her to do better next time ! "

In view of all these facts the question at once arises : Are Russia and the United States prepared or are they preparing to meet such conditions, and to maintain their proper naval status as Pacific powers ? My answer to that question, based on observations of Japan's naval strength already in sight and on what I know of her intended programmes for further increase in the immediate future, as compared with the relative conditions of Russia and this country would be in the negative.

Just now Russia is trying the experiment of reliance on her own Imperial dockyards, while the United States has halted completely. The Russian dockyards are efficient, as far as they go, and turn out good work, judging from such specimens as I have seen. But their capacity is not adequate to the task that is presented by the situation which I have delineated. No other nation relies wholly on its own public dockyards for new naval constructions. England, with public dockyards almost equal in capacity to those of the rest of the world combined, builds over 65 per cent. of her displacement and 97 per cent. of her horsepower by contract with private shipyards and machine-shops. France, with very great dockyard facilities, builds a large proportion of her hulls and machinery by contract. The same is true of Germany, Italy, and the United States. But Russia has no great private shipbuilding facilities, and there are no visible signs of the immediate development of resources of that description.

Japan, on the contrary, though she has some facilities of her own, is drawing upon the very best resources elsewhere to be found ; she is drawing on the shipbuilding power at once of England, France, Germany, and the United States. Not only that, but more than that ; the vessels Japan is building in the shipyards of England, France, and Germany are superior to any vessels those nations are building for themselves, class for class.

Hence, viewing the situation from any point at will, the conclusion of any one qualified to judge must be that, in the race for naval supremacy in the Pacific, Japan is gaining, while Russia and the United States are losing ground.

It requires little prescience to discern that the issue which is to settle that question of supremacy as between the powers may not be long deferred.

Though Japan's naval activity is primarily significant of a purpose to secure general predominance in Oriental seas, and though, as I have suggested, there is no immediate reason for, or prospect of, trouble between Japan and the United States involving naval armaments, yet, in the broad general sense of dignity on the sea, our country can by no means safely ignore or be inattentive to the progress of our Oriental neighbor toward the rank of a first-class sea power in the Pacific Ocean. The completion of her fleet now building will, inside of three years, give Japan that rank, and the future programme already laid out will accentuate it. The superior quality of Japan's new navy is even more significant than its enormous quantity. She has no useless ships, none obsolete; all are up to date.

Meantime, the attitude of the United States seems quite as supine as that of Russia. It is not necessary to go into minute detail on this point. Suffice it to say that, taking Russia, Japan, and the United States as the three maritime powers most directly concerned in the Pacific Ocean, and whose interests are most immediately affected by its command, Japan at her present rate of naval progress, viewed with relation to the lack of progress of the other two, must in three years be able to dominate the Pacific against either, and, in less than ten years, against both.

I have heard the question raised as to the character and quality of the Japanese *personnel*; I have heard the suggestion that, magnificent as their material may be, their officers and men are not up to the European or American standard. It is not my intention to discuss this phase of the matter. But it is worth while to observe that, if the Japanese officers with whom we are in daily contact as inspectors of work we are doing for their government are average samples, they have no odds to ask of the officers of any other navy whatsoever as to professional ability, practical application and capacity to profit by experience. And it should also be borne in mind that they have had more and later experience in actual warfare than the officers of any other navy, or of all other navies. While all other navies have been wrestling with the theoretical problems of war colleges, or encountering the hypothetical conditions of squadron evolutions,



fleet manœuvres and sham battles, the Japanese have been sinking or taking the ships, bombarding the towns and forcing the harbors of their enemy. I do not know how others may view this sort of disparity in experience, but in my opinion it is the most portentous fact in the whole situation, and because of it no navy that has not done any fighting at all has the slightest license to question in any respect the quality of the *personnel* of the Japanese navy that has done a good deal of extremely successful fighting.

On the whole the attitude of Japan among the powers is in the last degree admirable. Her aspirations are exaltedly patriotic, and her movements to realize them are planned with a consummate wisdom, and executed with a systematic skill which nations far older in the arts of Western civilization would do well to emulate.

CHARLES H. CRAMP.